

Semicolons and Colons

Teaching

A semicolon separates elements of a sentence. It is stronger than a period, but not as strong as a comma.

Semicolons in Compound Sentences Use a semicolon to join the parts of a compound sentence if you don't use a coordinating conjunction.

We discovered two sunken vessels; however, only one yielded pieces of gold.

Use a semicolon between the parts of a compound sentence if the clauses are long and complicated, or when one or more of them contain commas.

Three ships sailed from Hispaniola; but only one, with a crew of 17 men, made it back to Spain.

Semicolons with Items in a Series When there are commas within parts of a series, use a semicolon to separate the parts.

We tracked voyages from Cuba; Jamaica, south of Cuba; and Haiti, southeast of Cuba.

Colons Use a colon in the following ways: to introduce a list of items; after the formal greeting in a business letter; and between hours and minutes in expressions of time. When using the colon to introduce a list, use it only after nouns or pronouns.

Dear Captain Phillips:

We will arrive at 11:45 A.M. Dr. Johnson's talk will cover the following islands: Martinique, Trinidad, and Grenada.

Using Semicolons and Colons

Add semicolons and colons where they are needed in the following sentences. Replace or cross out commas if necessary.

1. Captain Kidd was tried and hanged, Sir Francis Drake was knighted by the queen.
2. In the 1500s and 1600s, pirate captains and navy commanders had common goals, and, to tell the truth, I don't see much difference between Kidd and Drake.
3. Thomas likes pirate stories, therefore, I recommended *Treasure Island*.
4. Alison likes three subjects language arts, history, and science.
5. We studied for three hours for that test, unfortunately, we studied the wrong material.
6. Let's ask Jonathan, he's the expert.
7. Sylvia is the most talented, however, she doesn't practice enough.
8. Successful diving for treasure depends on three things good research, good weather, and good luck.
9. The test is at 300, not 330.
10. This is a good treasure ground, but we didn't find anything valuable, except coral.
11. Treasure diving is fun, financing an expedition is hard work.
12. In the search of the ruins, one crew found gold, silver, and brass, but the other crew found wine bottles, wooden serving bowls, and an iron cooking pot.

**Lesson
5**

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More Practice

A. Using Semicolons and Colons

Rewrite this book report, adding semicolons and colons where they are needed.

Treasure Island is one of the best pirate stories ever it's about an expedition in search of a buried treasure. It's written from the point of view of the good guys, but the most memorable character, without question, is a pirate, the one-legged Long John Silver. He has many attractive qualities great intelligence, leadership ability, and a fine sense of drama.

Another character, Ben Gunn, was once a pirate, however, the pirate crew to which he belonged left him marooned on *Treasure Island*. Now he joins forces with the good guys against Long John Silver and the pirates.

B. Using Semicolons and Colons

On the line to the right, write the word(s) from the sentence that should be followed by a semicolon or colon. Write the correct punctuation mark following each word. If the sentence is punctuated correctly, write **Correct**.

EXAMPLE Robert Louis Stevenson wrote these tales of adventure *Treasure Island*, *Kidnapped*, and *David Balfour*. *adventure*:

1. *Treasure Island* has all the elements of an exciting story intricate plot, interesting characters, dramatic situations, and suspense. _____
2. It's full of suspense, but the good guys, some of whom are interesting, some of whom are dull, win out in the end. _____
3. I stayed up until 10:30 three nights in a row reading it. _____
4. Jim begins the treasure hunt, he finds a map in the trunk of an inn guest who dies. _____
5. Jim gathers some trusted older friends to help him, but one of them, the squire, talks too much. _____

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Application

A. Proofreading a Play Review

The critic who wrote this play review didn't know how to use semicolons and colons. Prepare her review for publication by adding the needed semicolons and colons.

The new play at the Phoenix is about a cartographer, a mapmaker, but it's more interesting than you might think. The cartographer is a mysterious man, almost from the start of the play you know he's hiding something. He lives in the early 1700s, and he's always searching for maps of the Caribbean, especially any islands visited by pirates. He never works with the maps, what is he looking for? The play has attractive qualities strong writing, humor, interesting characters, and a surprise ending, which I won't give away.

B. Writing Sentences with Semicolons and Colons

For each item, write a sentence that matches the description in parentheses.

EXAMPLE (sentence that uses a semicolon to join the parts of a compound sentence without a coordinating conjunction)

The treasure was hidden on an island; only one map showed its location.

1. (sentence that uses a colon in an expression of time)

2. (sentence that uses a semicolon to separate parts when commas appear within parts of a series)

3. (sentence that uses a semicolon to join the parts of a compound sentence without a coordinating conjunction)

4. (sentence that uses a colon to introduce a list of items)
